



THE CULTURAL GAP IN ANDRAGOGY AND A COMPARISON WITH THE GURUKULA SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Atulit Singh

Department of Commerce, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India.

ABSTRACT

The first and prime right of all human beings is education. Without education, we are incomplete, and our life is meaningless. To assess human capital, education is one of the most important sources. When people speak about education, they tend to associate it with schooling, or any structured institutional idea of education. So, we see many picturing places like schools or colleges when they see or hear the word. They may also think of unique positions, such as teachers or tutors. But is that all that education is? The issue with this is that the way a lot of schools and teachers work is not exactly what we can fairly call education when attempting to help people learn. In addition to that, culture finds no place in such a perspective, and in the system, as a consequence. Although schools, colleges and universities do form a part of education, they are limited, generally, to the formal dimension of education. Education could also be informal, or even non-formal. In essence, it is a process of welcoming truth and opportunity; of promoting and giving time to exploration. In formal or informal settings, education may take place and any experience that has a formative impact on the way one thinks, feels, or acts can be called educational. The teaching approach is called pedagogy, in contrast to which, we have andragogy, a term coined originally in 1833. They could be seen as two different sets of approaches towards learning. However, as a whole, there is a general consensus on the fact that andragogy is learner-directed to a greater extent than traditional pedagogy. Therefore, on the surface, andragogy seems to be a systematically better alternative to pedagogy. Nonetheless, it is not without its own share of criticisms. In the Indian context, the similarities between certain principles of andragogy and the system of Gurukula have previously gone unnoticed. This system of andragogy, which originally entailed merely 'adult learning', needs to be analyzed in the Indian context; in specific, within the contours of the Gurukula system of Education. How, in other words, has the system of education made its way down the ages, in this land of utmost diversities. Has there always been the prevalence of the principles of andragogy in the Indian culture?

KEYWORDS: Education, Systems of Education, Pedagogy, Andragogy, Human Capital, Indigenous Education, Gurukula.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The 1813 Charter Act passed by the British Parliament extended the charter of the East India Company for another 20 years. This act is notable in that it established the constitutional status of the British Indian territories for the first time. The British Government, as a provision under this Act would play a greater role in the spread of Western Education in India. This very Act marks, in many ways, the origin of the spread of Western pedagogical model of learning in India, at large. Before this was there a system of education based on religious backgrounds, or even occupational backgrounds, ranging from paathshalas, to madrasas, to Gurukulas. As it would be a herculean task to go through the systems of all the various classes of educational institutions that were in prevalence in the Indian Civilization, the scope of this paper, shall be limited to the study of the systems of Gurukula.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Starting with the nature of andragogy and its hallmarks, the criticisms of andragogical model of learning have been explored. The glaring gap of indigenous and cultural education, in andragogy, has been inspected and its merits identified. India's own history of education, particularly since the British Era and Wood's Dispatch, is noted and commentaries on its lost essence of (indigenous) education analyzed.

2.1 Andragogy – What does it mean?

The term "andragogy" was initially invented in 1833 by Alexander Kapp, a German educator. Andragogy, by Eugen Rosenstock-Hussy, was built into an adult education philosophy. Later on, the American educator Malcolm Knowles became very famous in the US, through the spread of andragogy as a model of education. Knowles affirmed andragogy (Greek: "man-leading") to be distinctive from the more traditional word pedagogy (Greek: "child leading").

The philosophy of andragogy is an attempt to establish a theory for adult learning in particular. Knowles stresses that adults are self-directed and expect choices to be made. This fundamental element must be discussed in adult learning programmes.

2.2 Hallmarks of Andragogy:

Since most educators know pedagogy, andragogy is characterized by experience as opposed to pedagogy [1]. The learner is self-directed, the vast experiences of an adult are applied to knowledge, a student is ready to learn at a point of life, adult learning is a problem-focused and the adult is internally driven. Furthermore, Knowles considers that adult education facilitator should build an environment conducive to learning, that the learner actively participates in each stage of this phase [2].

2.3 Principles of Andragogy:

Adult education is not rote memory, but is based on awareness, organisation and

knowledge synthesis. There are six essential Principles of Adult Learning [3]:

1. *The Need to Know.* Adults need to understand why they need to learn something before they start learning it. A preference of the participant is the decision to be taught; a self-driven initiative.
2. *Self-concept.* As a person molds his or her self-concept, he or she transitions from a dependent personality to a self-directed person. Self-awareness and acceptance are sought through instruction.
3. *Experience.* With maturity, a person accumulates a growing store of experience that becomes an increased learning resource.
4. *Readiness to learn.* As an individual matures his ability to learn is increasingly tailored to the evolutionary tasks of his social position. Education inspires new talents to grow and a variety of possibilities to be remembered.
5. *Orientation to learning.* As a person matures his/her time perspective switches from one deferred knowledge application to the immediate application and thus his/her approach to learning transfers from one subject to the other. Education promotes a global vision and opens up new possibilities for ongoing development.
6. *Motivation to learn.* The inspiration for learning matures internally. True education, therefore, requires a lifetime of self-learning.

2.4 Criticisms of the Andragogical Model of Learning:

Knowles has had a substantial influence on adult education through verbalizing issues, techniques and challenges in adult education. There are however, several questions left over from a critical reflection on his work. Many critiques of andragogy have been made. But I shall only restrict myself to the ones which are relevant to the scope of this paper.

1. *Andragogy as an age-restricted model of learning.* Some critiques pointed out that considering the sound andragogical principles of learning, it follows in no way that the andragogical model of learning should only be used to teach adults. Knowles modified his views as to whether Andragogy related only to adults, and assumed that pedagogy-andragogy reflects, depending on the case, a continuum from teacher-to-student learning and that both approaches are important for children and adults [4]. It has also been argued that the disparity in learning is not due to the age and phase of life, but to individual characteristics and the differences in "material, culture and strength" [5].
2. *The Cultural Gap in Andragogy.* Andragogy absents the relevance of

indigenous education in learning. The opponents of andragogy believe that the ideas that have been put forward do not follow cultural standards, and that they do in reality mimic the west [6]. Where, indeed, is the spiritual element in learning? Andragogy presents itself as a rational and analytical process of learning that dismisses the importance which is held by indigenous education, or the education of "the native".

2.5 Culturally Diverse Education – Is it any good?

The teaching of indigenous knowledge, models and methods and content within formal or non-formal education frameworks is a particular subject of Indigenous education, or culturally diverse education. Culturally diverse education can be classified on the basis of three fundamental tenets that are:

1. A connection between learning and one's distinctive culture [7],
2. An awareness of the various modes of understanding [8], and
3. Embedding indigenous education [9].

It has also been pointed out that education for indigenous people is education about both life and the essence of the spirit [9]. The essence of the spirit that drives us as well as the energies around us are part of this form of education. Indigenous societies should "reclaim and revalue their languages and [traditions] and thus increase the performance of indigenous students in education," thereby ensuring their survival as a community [10]. Indigenous ways of learning in various cultures and countries have been identified by a growing body of scientific literature. Learning in indigenous cultures is a mechanism in which all group members are involved [11].

In business too, indigenous education has some role to play. In management, four principles of andragogy can be implemented in order to develop a business education that is indigenous [12]

1. Cultural ways of learning (e.g., storytelling) to disseminate cultural knowledge.
2. Learning can be collaborative.
3. The practical and theoretical elements can come together based on the indigenous community need.
4. Motivation can be collective.

2.6 Introduction of Western Education in India:

The advent of Western Education can be traced to the Wood's Dispatch in 1854, which officially, undermined the "practical value" of native texts and introduced, at large, a system of education with English as the medium of instruction. Before this, there were other native institutions of learning, one of which was Gurukula system of Education. A widening of the Indian horizon, an appreciation for English literature and institutions, a protest against certain traditions and aspects of Indian life and an increasing desire for political change were brought about by English education [13]. In British India, the new education did not suit anyone for trade or industry; government service was its main objective [13]. The objective of passing exams with the highest honors is dominated by modern Indian education; this target was virtually non-existent in ancient India [14].

2.7 Education in Gurukula – A glimpse of the past:

A Gurukula or Gurukulam in ancient India was a kind of spiritual education system with shishya ('students' or 'disciples') residing in the house of the same spiritual guru [15]. Students will learn from the guru and support the guru to do routine everyday household tasks in his daily life. However, some scholars suggest that the practices are not a mundane and rather necessary part of education to instill self-discipline among students [16]. What was taught in these institutions of education is a question that many experts have looked at, as also how was education imparted. The tradition of ancient Indian education has stretched over many generations, so we inevitably notice major improvements in the curriculum over the course of several centuries. This is only natural; the curriculum is intimately related to a person's achievements and ambitions. For the purpose of preparing each person for the call he was to follow, education was given. If the perspective on life changes or new knowledge branches emerge, extensive changes in the curriculum in schools and colleges become unavoidable [14].

2.8 The Principles of Gurukula [14]:

Many principles [17] had to be followed in the Gurukula system of Education. The ones which stand relevant for the scope of this paper are:

1. *Promotion of Social Efficiency and Happiness* – Taking the Learner's Background into account: It was not just for the sake of culture or to improve mental and intellectual powers and capabilities that education was imparted. Indirectly but effectively, these objectives were certainly promoted, but mostly to train every person to 'the call' which he was to obey. Society had adopted the division theory of employment, which in later periods was primarily regulated by the inheritance principle. Exceptional talent could always choose the career it liked; It was never-

theless considered to be in the interest of the common man that he should pursue his family's calling. The educational method was intended to qualify the members of the new generation for their predetermined life spheres. In its own profession, each trade, guild and family educated its children. This scheme may have sacrificed only a few people's individual inclinations, but it definitely served many.

2. *Education as Even Cooperation:* Ancient Indians held that education was not a passive or one-sided mechanism and that only when absolute and voluntary cooperation comes from students can it be capable of the greatest outcomes. They need to experience the urge to learn more knowledge; then they will be delighted to teach them. It would be pointless to spend time and work on the education of insincere students if there is no genuine desire for learning and development.
3. *Education for All:* Since education was viewed as the best organisation to better society, it was of course, stressed that all those who were eligible to obtain education should be available. It was not seen as the luxury of those fortunate few, as in Ancient Greece, who had the time to devote themselves to its purchase. From ancient times free education has been well-known in India. This education was conventional and not very lucrative, but poor students could get it without pay, with the exception of some personal teacher service. Nehru notes that the Hindu and Muslim practices were identical in this respect [13].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The aim of this paper, from the beginning, has been to draw parallels between the andragogical model of learning, and the Gurukula system of Education. However, it is not only what the paper is aimed at. The cultural gap in andragogical model of learning is largely unfilled, and indigenous knowledge, and culture, still struggle to find its place in the curriculum, and the approach. For that end, relevant institutional resources (1944-2021) have been examined to identify parallels and the cultural gap.

4. CONCLUSION:

From the principles of Gurukula that were once in existence can be observed some very striking similarities that hold true for the andragogical model of learning, such as:

1. The learner's background in the system of education in Gurukulas played a crucial role. Education was, as we have seen, imparted based on the background (mostly based on occupations) of the learner.
2. Readiness to learn was necessary to be in the learner as learning in ancient India was seen as an even cooperation.
3. Learning, being based on the learner's background, and for proving to be useful for the learner's trade and occupation was life-centered and task-centered, much as it is in andragogy.
4. The learner must have an internal motivation to learn before been sent off to Gurukula. The Guru would only admit its student in after he has tested the required thirst to learn. Thus, learn was less an economic activity and more an activity for genuine pursuit of intellectual development.

These merits of education were subtracted from the educational opportunities of the British era when Western education was implemented following the "Minute of Indian Education" by Macaulay in 1835, through which he expressed his opinion to substitute a "useful schooling" for the current educational system.

Apart from the similarities that the Gurukula system of learning shares with the andragogical model of learning, there were also some inherent limitations in the latter, as had been pointed out at the beginning of this paper. One such limitation was that andragogical model of learning was presented, at least in its early days, as age restricted. One while reading accounts relating to the Gurukula System of Learning can easily determine that not only was this system of education open for children or adolescents, but even adults would pursue vocational training for their own respective professions by admitting themselves to the Gurukula. Another limitation of andragogy was that it absents the requirement of indigenous learning, which forms an important component of holistic development. Many academics on the field believe that the "transformative capacity" of indigenous peoples to promote autonomy & justice" is available in indigenous education and information [18]. Thus, in some ways, Indian learning, until before colonialization, surpassed andragogy as a model of education. According to Gandhi [19], education should be focused on indigenous culture because otherwise, it would turn them into foreigners in their own countries. Thus, education, as per Gandhi, should build on indigenous culture. Gandhi drew the attention of his audience to the prevalent indigenous education system, which functioned in India even after the beginning of British rule.

With the announcement of the New Education Policy (2020), attempts have been made, to some extents, to liberalise the degree of pedagogical learning that has been prevalent in our country. But we have still a long way to go.

REFERENCES:

- I. M. S. Knowles, "The Modern Practice of Adult Education; Andragogy versus Pedagogy," 1970.
- II. R. Caffarella and S. B. Merriam, "Linking the individual learner to the context of adult learning," *Handb. Adult Contin. Educ.*, pp. 55–70, 2000.
- III. M. S. Knowles, "Andragogy: Adult learning theory in perspective," *Community Coll. Rev.*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 9–20, 1978.
- IV. S. B. Merriam and L. M. Baumgartner, *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. John Wiley & Sons, 2020.
- V. A. Hanson, A. Edwards, and A. Hanson, "The search for a separate theory of adult learning," *Boundaries Adult Learn.*, pp. 99–107, 1996.
- VI. D. D. Pratt, "Andragogy after twenty-five years," *New Dir. Adult Contin. Educ.*, vol. 57, no. 57, pp. 15–23, 1993.
- VII. R. J. Wlodkowski and M. B. Ginsberg, *Diversity & Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching*. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series. Jossey-Bass Education Series, Jossey-Bass Social and Behavioral Science Series. ERIC, 1995.
- VIII. N. R. E. Goldberger, J. M. E. Tarule, C. McVicker, and M. F. E. Belenky, *Knowledge, difference, and power: Essays inspired by "Women's Ways of Knowing."*. Basic Books, 1996.
- IX. G. Cajete, *Look to the mountain: An ecology of indigenous education*. ERIC, 1994.
- X. S. May and S. Aikman, "Indigenous education: Addressing current issues and developments," *Comp. Educ.*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 139–145, 2003.
- XI. B. Rogoff, B. Najafi, and R. Mejia-Arauz, "Constellations of cultural practices across generations: Indigenous American heritage and learning by observing and pitching in," *Hum. Dev.*, vol. 57, no. 2–3, pp. 82–95, 2014.
- XII. A. Gainsford and M. Evans, "Integrating andragogical philosophy with Indigenous teaching and learning," *Manag. Learn.*, vol. 52, no. 5, pp. 559–580, 2021.
- XIII. J. Nehru, *Discovery of India*. Penguin UK, 2008.
- XIV. A. S. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, Second. Nand Kishore & Bros., 1944.
- XV. Y. C. Cheng, K. T. Tsui, K. W. Chow, and M. C. M. Mok, "Subject teaching and teacher education in the new century: research and innovation/edited by Ying Cheong Cheng, Kwok Tung Tsui, King Wai Chow, Magdalena Mo Ching Mok," 2002.
- XVI. A. Joshi and R. K. Gupta, "Elementary education in Bharat (that is India): insights from a postcolonial ethnographic study of a Gurukul," *Int. J. Indian Cult. Bus. Manag.*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 100–120, 2017.
- XVII. J. Dayal, "The 'gurukula' system: An inquiry into the Krishna philosophy," 1989.
- XVIII. L. M. Semali and J. L. Kincheloe, *What is indigenous knowledge?: Voices from the academy*. Routledge, 2002.
- XIX. A. Saraie, "Indigenous Interpretations of the Right to Education Incorporating Gandhi's Visionary Philosophy to Educational Reform," *Emory Intl Rev.*, vol. 30, p. 501, 2015.